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IS

My Heart Changed?

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BY
REV. HERBERT H. HAWES, D. D.,
STAUNTON, VA.

IS MY HEART CHANGED?

BY

REV. HERBERT H. HAWES, D. D.,

STAUNTON, VA.

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Dedicated

TO THE

REV. EDWARD P. TERHUNE, D. D.,

MY BROTHER AND FRIEND,

Whose strong, patient hand,—faithfully seconded by her whom God gave to be with him,—upheld and guided me through all the sore travail of preparation by which I came to service in the blessed Gospel of Jesus Christ. This little brochure is sent forth with much heart-yearning, that, in its usefulness among souls, these—my loved ones—may rejoice that their labor was "not in vain in the Lord."

HERBERT H. HAWES.

STAUNTON, VA., 1887.

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Is my Heart Changed?

CHAPTER I.

Troubles.

"HOW can I know that my heart is changed?" Many earnest souls find serious troubles between themselves and the answer to this great question. For them we write. The troubles are of two classes:

1. Those made by the sinner himself, when he decides beforehand what special signs and experiences he should have under the act of the Holy Spirit in changing his heart.

2. Those which are thrust upon sinners by wrong, ignorant, or imprudent teachings.

Most firmly we believe that, but for such troubles, not a few would confess Jesus Christ as their Saviour, who are now standing aloof from him in doubt and fear.

That a change of heart is essential, every one must know. Our Lord says: "Except a man be

born again," that is, born from above by the Holy Spirit's agency, "he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John iii. 3). So, then, there is no hope for us until our hearts are changed. Therefore, the great question is, "How can I know that this work has been done in my heart?"

Very many wrong answers are given—some by the sinner, who forms his own ideas; some by the devil's deceit; some by unsafe teachers, in the pulpit and out of it. We intend no criticisms on the teachings of others. We only state facts. When a minister, or any other Christian, describes his own conversion as full of signs and wonders, then assures his hearers that they must pass through such experiences, we call that a wrong teaching; and frequently we have heard exactly this. Such teaching may not be *intended*, and, doubtless, it is far from the thought of any one to mislead a sinner; but the fact we state will hardly be doubted.

If we overlook this fact, another remains, viz.: that sinners are often in great perplexity and darkness, even when most anxious for light.

Almost anywhere one may be heard saying, "I do wish to be a Christian." Now ask him, "What is your difficulty? Why not be a Christian, if you desire it?"

From the great majority of anxious souls the reply will come, "I am not good enough: not fit to be a Christian. I never had the right kind of experiences and feelings; never felt that my heart was changed." Some such replies we meet in nine cases out of ten. The great trouble of sinners is just there, after they are awakened to concern about their souls.

And now we make an assertion which may seem, at first sight, erroneous. It is this: *the Holy Spirit may have changed the heart of the sinner, even when he is complaining and sorrowing that his heart is not changed.*

But how can this be possible? Surely if such a great work has been wrought, there should be no doubt nor want of evidence! To justify our assertion we give a "scrap of history" in the next chapter. We have found many *unconfessed Christians*, and believe there are many more. So we call them, for want of a better name.

CHAPTER II.

A Revelation.

MANY years ago, during a series of services, we had the following interview with a married lady, who was one of those present among the inquirers for spiritual guidance. Her one trouble was, as she expressed it, "I have had no change of heart."

Upon ascertaining this, we asked, "Why do you think your heart has never been changed?"

Somewhat surprised, she answered, "Why, because I never *felt* any change, and *surely I would have felt it*, had it ever taken place."

"Possibly," we replied, "but your *consciousness* may have been deadened or hindered in some way. The change of heart is the instantaneous act of the Holy Spirit; but because of wrong expectations, one may not be possessed of *consciousness* that this work has been done, or may be mistaken as to the evidences of it. How, as you think, ought you to have felt, or have been affected, had you received a change of heart?"

"Why, I can hardly tell, sir; but I am sure I

ought to have had such feelings as would leave me in no doubt."

"Yes; but what *sort* of feelings? Suppose you had felt as quickly and keenly as if receiving an electric shock—would that have satisfied you?"

"Oh! yes, sir; I would have been convinced, then; and I always thought that one ought to have something as positive as that, anyhow."

"Where did you get that idea? Did you read it in the Bible?"

"No, sir; not that I can remember. But it has always been my impression, for I have heard that a sinner must be greatly affected when the Holy Spirit converts him."

"No," we answered, "the Bible never gave you the notions you are holding, yet the world is full of people who think just as you do. Now, listen: do you believe that Jesus understands this matter?"

"Yes, sir; I know he must understand all about it."

"Are you willing to throw all of your ideas away for awhile, and hear what Jesus has to say about the manner of the Holy Spirit's working?"

"Yes, sir; of course I am."

"Very well. Look through that window.

What causes those leaves, on that tree, to move as they do?"

"The wind, of course."

"Yes. But suppose, in looking out, you had seen great clouds of dust flying; trees bending and swaying as if they would break; felt this church trembling, and heard a mighty, rushing sound all around us, how would you have accounted for that?"

"I would have said, a very hard wind was blowing."

"Then, the wind does not always blow with the same degree of force, you see; nor does it always blow from the same direction. Above us, too, the currents of air are different, often, from those which we feel. Do you understand and believe all this?"

"Yes, sir. It is quite plain and true."

"So far, so good. Now, see why these questions were asked. Our Lord Jesus Christ says (John iii. 8), when teaching about the change of heart, 'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: *so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*' He was illustrating what we misunderstand so often, namely, the manner of the Holy Spirit's working. We cannot foretell

guide, govern, nor limit the blowing of the wind; and the same is true as to the action of the Holy Spirit. Neither wind nor Spirit works in the same manner, nor by any *cast-iron rules*, at all times; but there are differences in the actions of each, which no man can account for. If the wind does not blow as we think it should, we will not say it does not blow at all; and so, if the Holy Spirit does not work by some rule which we had framed for him, we must not conclude he is not working at all. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir; I think I do, perfectly."

"Then, let us go a little further. Suppose a vessel sails into port before a breeze, so gentle that it scarcely swells the canvass; and another comes dashing in on the wings of a storm; what does it matter as to how they came in, if both reached port safely? Both reached the desired port, and that is enough, though they had very different experiences. *The same agent* brought both in—the wind, in each case. Now, our question is this: What difference need be considered as to the special experiences through which sinners are brought to Christ by the one great agent, the Holy Spirit? *If they reach Christ, it is enough!* Some, like one of our vessels, may come so gently that they have no remarkable

experiences. Others, as the other vessel, may come through stormy exercises of mind and heart. Experiences may differ greatly, but what of that, if *the result is one?* Now, you have been waiting for stormy experiences, and they have not come. Therefore you are disappointed, or still waiting unsatisfied. But answer, thoughtfully, a few questions. In order to cover enough time, with certainty, let us go back ten years. What sort of a young lady were you ten years ago?"

"I was very careless and thoughtless and worldly."

"Are you sure that you cared nothing about your spiritual condition at that time?"

"Yes, sir; I was utterly careless, and had no thoughts about my soul."

"When did you begin to desire Christian life and hope?"

"I cannot remember that, sir; but I have had the earnest wish some time."

"Did you pray and read your Bible ten years ago?"

"No, sir; I had no care to do such things; I almost disliked the Bible."

"You doubtless went to church, but why?"

"Because it was custom, I suppose, and I liked to see my friends there."

"Was there nothing which attracted you in Christian life at that time?"

"No, sir; far from it. I remember when I thought religion very dull, and that it would spoil all pleasure in life."

"So you know, positively, that ten years ago you were very far from thinking of and desiring Christian life?"

"Yes, sir; I remember very well. I was a careless, light-hearted girl, and was afraid of religion—and Christians too, if they wanted to talk to me."

"Very well. We have made a picture of you *as you once were.* Keep it in mind; for we must see if we can make another, and then see if the two will be alike. What are you now, as to spiritual things? Are you still afraid of religion, still careless about it?"

"Why, no, sir! else I would not be here talking with you about it."

"Are you not afraid that Christians will talk to you about religion now?"

"No, sir. I am glad when any one will try to help me, and feel grateful for it."

"Try to help you? Would it *help* you if some one could show you the way to Christ now?"

"Indeed it would, sir; for I would give or do anything to be a Christian."

"And so you are not careless and thoughtless about your soul now?"

"Oh! no, sir," she answered with tears, "*I do so want to be saved!* Oh! if my heart were only changed, and I could know I was saved, I would be so much relieved!"

"Do you ever pray and read your Bible now?"

"Yes, sir. Every day. Sometimes again and again in one day."

"Is that done as mere duty, or do you find any pleasure in it?"

"I find much pleasure in praying and reading my Bible. I like to do both. But somehow, I don't become satisfied."

"And you still come to church because it is the fashion, and you like to meet your friends there?"

"Oh! no, sir. I don't come for that now, altogether. I do like to meet my friends; but I am always hoping I will hear something to help my soul."

"See how many people are here, waiting until our inquiry meeting is over. They all know why you are here, and what conversation we are having. Does that thought disturb you? Are you ashamed to have any know your feelings?"

"Why, no, sir. Such a thing has not been in my mind a moment!"

"Once you would have been ashamed to have any one see you praying. Would you be ashamed to kneel here before all these people, and pray to Jesus?"

"No, indeed, sir. All the world might be looking on. I only care that I may be a good, true Christian."

"But you are so unworthy and sinful; does that give you any trouble?"

With tears, once more, she answered: "Oh! indeed, sir, it does. Oh! if God *would* only change my heart, and make me better!"

"But look, have we not made another picture of you, feelings and all? Look at yourself as you once were; then as you now are! Think of the feelings you *once* had; then of your feelings *to-day!*

"Hold these two pictures of yourself firmly in mind; take them home, and study them well; then ask yourself, 'Is my heart changed, or not?' and after that, try to think of Jesus as if he were present with you, waiting for your decision. See if you can kneel down and say to him, as the feeling of your heart,—

'Just as I am, without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bidd'st me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come!'

"Repeat the whole hymn to Jesus, if you can do it sincerely, and when you return to church to-morrow, we will have another talk."

The next morning she again came forward among the "inquirers," and in answer to our first question, said, "Oh! sir, I see it all now. I do believe my heart is changed. I am not what I was; and I feel that I can and do give myself to Christ. I am satisfied!"

Will any doubt her change of heart? All this occurred about seventeen years ago. She united with the church soon after this profession of faith, and remained a consistent Christian during the rest of our pastorate there.

Since writing thus far, a letter has come from this lady, in which she says, "I feel that I have not been disappointed," and assures us that she is "still looking to Jesus, and hoping through his tender mercies to reach heaven."

The results of that test, as to the change of heart, have stood the trial of seventeen years, and she is not "disappointed!"

CHAPTER III.

Feelings.

"BUT must I have no strong feelings in passing from an unsaved to a saved condition?" *Have just as much feeling as the Holy Spirit will give you;* but do not fix the length, breadth, height and depth thereof. Feeling there must and will be. How much, or how strong, or how varied, we can tell no more than we can tell how or whence the wind will blow a week hence. *When* the wind blows, you can tell its direction, force, etc. So *when* the Holy Spirit works, you can tell what feelings he is giving you. Beyond this no mortal can go. What we wish to impress is this:

A sinner may have all right feelings, yet not recognize them as such, because he is expecting other experiences, as necessary to his salvation, or as proofs that his heart is changed. 'Tis natural to suppose he ought to know when the great change comes; and he will know it, unless he has been led to look for wrong signs. False expectations often hide the truth.

We gave the history, at length, in the preceding chapter, because we felt sure it would prove helpful in illustrating this point; for it shows that the Holy Spirit may have changed a sinner's heart, yet, that the sinner may not have understood the truth, because of ignorance or wrong expectations.

Another incident which came under our observation may serve a good purpose just here. We once heard a noted minister—famous in his section as a "Revivalist"—give his "conversion experiences." He came down from the pulpit to do it. As he exhorted sinners to accept Christ, he told us how, in his conversion, he had been shaken in his whole being; how his heart had been overwhelmed with the terrors of conviction and sorrows of repentance; then how it had been filled with the joy and gladness of believing. It must have been a most "remarkable conversion"!

A few days after this, a young man came to us, anxious about his soul. He had been much troubled, and could find no peace, though seeking it earnestly. We had a long, earnest talk with him, during which we became fully convinced that he was not far from, if not already within, "the kingdom." Therefore we asked,

"What is holding you back? Is there not some special hindrance which you have not mentioned?"

He answered, "I am not satisfied that my heart is changed, for my experiences do not suit me. And to be candid with you, you heard Dr. ——— tell about his conversion the other night? Now I can never be satisfied until I have such experiences as he had."

"Then," we replied, "*you will never have them.* God will not put up with your *condition-making.*"

And so it proved. He never had his desire. He did confess Christ not long afterwards, but his determination to have a "remarkable conversion" had to be abandoned. We say to all: *Make no conditions with God.* If you demand "remarkable experiences," in all probability you will never have them. And this, not because God is unwilling to gratify you, but because he *does not wish to have you deceived into resting upon a false foundation.* Tears do not wash away sins; feelings do not atone for guilt.

"Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears forever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must cleanse, and thou alone."

Go to Jesus singing that.

One of the sweetest Christians we ever knew has just passed "through the valley of the shadow of death" triumphantly, and very gladly she gave up her young life to be with Christ. She went away saying that angels were singing to her, and sweetest strains of unearthly music were in her ears. Her death was full of rapture. Yet she said she never knew the wonders and signs of conversion—experiences such as others talk of, and could not tell when she had become a Christian, but from her earliest recollection had loved her Saviour. *Oh! what is it that we feel* TOWARDS CHRIST? That is the question.

The Gospel says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Never once does it say, "Believe on yourself, or on your feelings, frames of mind," etc. *We are blessed when we realize that we are not worth trusting!* God knows that; and how often do we find it true!

The "Spirit of truth" will never lead us to be satisfied with ourselves. And is he not right? All know the close, subtle connection between soul and body, or spirit and matter, so that the condition of one often affects the feelings of the other. To-day you are well and strong,

full of buoyant health, and you are also happy in your hope of salvation; but to-morrow brings an attack of indigestion, and lo! all your peace is gone, and in its stead, unrest and despondency are supreme. Our feelings are like shifting sands—what is founded on them must fall. And would He who "so loved" us give such uncertain grounds for our hope to rest upon? Surely not.

Yet we fear there is too much cultivation of this desire for wonderful feelings. Too often sinners are wrongly *wrought up* in what we call "protracted meetings." *Do not misunderstand us.* We believe in protracted services. Many good Christians have come out of them to bless the Church and the world. But it is also true that many come out of them "having a name to live, and are dead." Congregations are *handled, drilled, worked up,* until excitement and currents of sympathy are forced to flow, and upon the high waves many a sinner is rushed into a confession of faith without understanding what he is doing. Here is an experience—one out of a multitude. The gentleman narrating it to us said: "I once attended a protracted meeting, where there grew up a great stir and excitement. One day, especially, everybody seemed greatly moved. Tears were flowing. Shouts were ming-

ling with sobs and groans. Presently I found tears streaming down my own cheeks, and was soon weeping bitterly. The preacher came to me and said, 'My young friend, the Spirit of God is striving with you. Don't resist him. Come forward to the penitent's seat, and seek the Lord while he may be found.' I went with him, still weeping as if my heart would break. After some praying and singing, he came to me again and said, 'Have you found peace, my young brother?'

"'No, sir,' I answered, for I felt greatly distressed.

"'But,' said he, 'don't you feel that you can trust Christ?'

"'I don't know, sir.'

"'Don't you feel happy?'

"'I don't know, sir.'

"'Don't you feel differently from what you ever felt before?'

"'Oh! yes, sir. I never felt as I do now, in all my life.'

"'Thanks be to God!' he shouted, 'another soul is converted! Get up, my young brother, and let all know you have found the Saviour.'

"Accordingly I arose from my knees, took my seat, and thought all was well with me. But

when the meeting closed, and the excitement was gone, all my hope went too. I soon found that I was no more a Christian than I was before. And that experience has made me afraid of religion ever since."

"Afraid of religion?" we said. "Better have said, afraid to trust your wrought-up feelings. We may fear to trust them, but we should never fear to trust Christ."

We afterwards had the pleasure of seeing this gentleman take his place at the Lord's Supper, in quietness of faith looking to Jesus. Ten years have passed, but he is still looking to Jesus. The *boy* had been led astray, but the *man* was led to Jesus. We mean nothing against emotions and play of feelings. Very freely we say, If the Holy Spirit works in you mightily, it is well. If he gives you such strong, glad feelings that you cannot restrain them, then, in God's name, *shout!* Sing and shout until you

> "Vie with Gabriel, while he sings
> In notes almost divine."

But we warn you, none of these experiences are your soul's saviour; nor are they your ground of hope; nor are they necessary to salvation; nor are they trustworthy evidences of a changed

heart. Make no conditions. If the Spirit takes you up, as to the top of a "mount of transfiguration," follow him gladly; but do not refuse to follow if he sees it is best to lead you "beside the still waters," in some valley of shadows and and quietness.

Above all things, we are anxious that you should *know what you are doing*. This rather than what you are *feeling*. Our Lord demands again and again that we *count the cost*, that we act with quiet, serious thought, and that we seek to know the rock from the sand when we would begin to build for eternity. To transact any important earthly business, men want the power of thinking and judging what they do. How much more is such a condition essential when we are called to transact the greatest of all business—that between God and our souls.

A sinner may have all feelings desired, all frames of mind coveted; yet, if beyond and through them all he does not look to Jesus as all his hope and all his salvation, he will be lost. Therefore we put everything else aside, as the true evidence of a changed heart, and count nothing gained, see no benefit, until the sinner is "safe in the arms of Jesus." To be brought there, whether through tumults or in quietness,

is to find the sign which is not to be repented of.

Feeling? feeling? I have none but this: I feel that I am a lost sinner, but that Jesus Christ is my accepted Saviour!

CHAPTER IV.

The Spirit's Mission.

IN John xvi. 14, our Lord said of the Holy Spirit, "*He shall glorify me.*" Grasp those four words, "with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." The Spirit is not to glorify the sinner by making him satisfied with himself, but he is to *glorify Christ* by leading the sinner to see and accept him as his Saviour.

Again, in John xvi. 13, 14, our Lord says, the Spirit will *guide us* "*into all truth.*" No wonder, then, that he will not let you, the sinner, be satisfied with what you see or feel yourself to be. Were he to give you comfort in yourself, —*let a sinner trust in himself*,—would not that be a deception? The "Spirit of truth" will not witness to a lie. He will not tell you that you are good when are not. Were he to make you feel good while you are yet sinful, that would not be guiding you "into all truth." and if he should allow you to make a saviour of your feelings, etc., that would not be glorifying Christ.

It would be putting Christ aside, and exalting your feelings above his merits.

Let us try a little catechism—

"How are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ? . . . By the effectual application of it to us by his Holy Spirit."

Yes; but "How doth the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ? . . . By working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling."

Yes; but "What is effectual calling? . . . The work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the Gospel."

Now *there is the truth.* Does it say anything about your goodness or fitness or satisfaction with self or good feelings? Not one word. But it tells you that you are going to have some feelings of *dissatisfaction* with self. "Convincing us of our sin and misery." Remember that sentence. It gives the sign of the Spirit's work.

Somewhere, we know not where, we saw or heard an illustration as follows: We take you to a dark room, and tell you it is full of all that is horrid and disgusting. You believe this after

a fashion, because you trust our word as true. But you do not actually *feel* the truth, for you see nothing—the room is too dark. As soon, however, as we throw open the blinds, you *see for yourself*, and through your own senses the truth appeals to you. Before, you *knew;* now, you *believe.*

God says "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." This you accept as true, because you know God tells the truth. Yet there is no appeal to your *consciousness.* You do not *feel* the truth. But now the Holy Spirit comes, "throws open the blinds, lets in the light," and behold! you feel that God was describing *your* heart. You are convinced of your own sin and misery, because the Spirit has come to "let in the light." Your heart was as a dark room before, but you did not *really believe* in your sinful and lost condition until the Holy Spirit showed it to you. To reach this conviction is to have evidence that the Spirit is with you. But is it not clear that you cannot be satisfied with such feelings? The Spirit comes to reprove (convince) the world of sin. (John xvi. 8, 9.) We must know and feel our need of Christ, or we will not accept him. Therefore the Spirit first "convinces of our own sin and misery."

He steadily works to take from us all of our own that we can fix hope and desire upon, or that we can put in Christ's place. So he works until nothing is left but "looking to Jesus."

Thus you see the mistake made in waiting and seeking for some satisfaction in self as the result of the Spirit's work. Christ says of the Holy Spirit: "He shall not speak of himself. . . . He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." He will therefore show you the things belonging to Christ's merits and righteousness; not anything belonging to your merits and righteousness. He does not suggest the question, "Am I good enough to be saved?" but this, "Am I sinner enough to need saving? And is Christ good enough to have my faith?" Not "Am I able to save myself?" but, "Is Christ able to save me?" Not "Can I trust myself?" but, "Can I trust the Lord Jesus Christ?"

We want to do some good works. So many are saying, "I would give or do anything to become a Christian." To all such sayings and feelings the Spirit answers, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."

Over and over again we say, When a sinner is convinced of his "sin and misery," and can

accept Jesus Christ as all his hope and all his salvation, he has reached the change of heart.

And again we ask, What matters it whether we can rejoice in "experiences" or not?—whether "the light" comes, as in the morning, stealing over the hill-tops and down into the valleys, stopping here and there to kiss the dew-drops and peep into the flower-hearts, or with the flashing, startling lightning-leap? It is enough if the sinner comes to the Saviour. God wants the *result* more than the *processes* by which it is reached.

The sinner who reaches the acceptance of Christ freely offered in the Gospel *must have had* all necessary experiences of repentance and faith, though he may not have recognized them in his progress to consciousness that he could accept the Saviour. In this result Christ is glorified. By *nature* we are not satisfied with Christ, and do not want him nor seek him. If, then, the time comes when we find ourselves wanting, seeking, accepting him, is not that positive proof that we have been changed? The Spirit's work and satisfaction are in reaching this result.

"You ask me *how* I gave my heart to Christ?
I do not know.
There came a yearning for him in my soul
So long ago.

I found earth's flowers would fade and die;
I wept for something that could satisfy;
And then—and then—somehow I seemed to dare
To lift my broken heart to him in prayer.
I do not know;
I cannot tell you how;
I only know
He is my Saviour now.

"You ask me *when* I gave my heart to Christ?
I cannot tell.
The day, or just the hour, I do not now
Remember well.
It must have been when I was all alone
The light of his forgiving Spirit shone
Into my heart, so clouded o'er with sin;
I think—I think 'twas then I let him in.
I do not know;
I cannot tell you when;
I only know
He is so dear since then.

"You ask me *where* I gave my heart to Christ?
I cannot say.
That sacred place has faded from my sight
As yesterday.
Perhaps he thought it better I should not
Remember where. How I should love that spot!
I think I could not tear myself away,
For I should want forever there to stay.
I do not know;
I cannot tell you where;
I only know
He came and blessed me there.

"You ask me *why* I gave my heart to Christ?
I can reply.
It is a wondrous story. Listen, while
I tell you why
My heart was drawn at length to seek his face:
I was alone; I had no resting place;
I heard of how he loved me with a love
Of depth so great, of height so far above
All human ken,
I longed such love to share,
And sought it then
Upon my knees, in prayer.

"You ask me *why I thought* this loving Christ
Would heed my prayer?
I knew he died upon the cross for me—
I nailed him there!
I heard his dying cry: 'Father, forgive!'
I saw him drink death's cup that I might live.
My head was bowed upon my breast in shame;
He called me, and in penitence I came.
He heard my prayer.
I cannot tell you how,
Nor when, nor where;
WHY, I have told you now."

—*G. E. Brown.*

And many have found him through this sweet experience, *knowing no more.* But is it not enough?

CHAPTER V.

In Christ.

CONTRARY to all expectations, sinners find many troubles after coming to Christ. One will say: "I fear after all, my faith is not real, because I have no joy in believing, and am beset with doubts."

We regret that, in giving an excellent illustration meeting this trouble, its author's name is not remembered.

Two men are on a sinking ship. If they remain there, they are lost. But a life-boat comes along-side, to take them to a place of safety. One of these men, understanding how trustworthy a life-boat is, steps into it promptly and gladly, and has no further anxiety. So is it in what we call *assurance of faith.* The sinner has it who trusts Christ without doubt or fear; and surely, he is blessed!

But now, see the other man on that ship. He knows his lost condition, yet fears to trust the simple way of deliverance. Only after much difficulty is he persuaded to enter the life-boat. He fears it "will not hold out," for the waves

run high and fast, and, as he imagines, many perils await him. But finally he also enters the life-boat, *taking all his doubts and fears with him.* From sinking ship to shore, he is tormented with anxieties and fears. Yet, in due time, the shore is reached, and both men are saved. So is it with "little faith," which our Lord sometimes rebuked, even while he helped. It has no comforts. It is full of fear and trembling. Yet all this does not keep it from laying hold upon the hope set before it. All faith short of full assurance has trouble. But here is a question: Of those two men taken from the sinking ship, *which was the safer* in the passage to the shore? Was not one just as safe as the other? Certainly! We easily understand that the confidence of one did not make the boat more able to carry him; nor did the fright of the other make the boat less able to save him. One was simply *more comfortable* while being saved than the other, who was as surely being saved.

So of sinners and Christ, our "Ark of Safety." All our rejoicings in accepting him do not make him more able to save nor add to our safety; and all our doubts and fears do not make him less able to save, nor take from our safety, if we do come to him.

The one great thing is, that *assurance* of faith, and faith compassed by doubts and fears, both lay hold upon Christ. In each case the *whole* dependence for salvation is in what Christ is; not at all and never in what we are or feel. The only danger is, that some sinner may let his doubts and fears keep him away from Christ. But here is a song for him:

"Just as I am, though tossed about
With many a conflict, many a doubt,
Fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come!"

And what will Jesus say? "Him that cometh unto me, I will in *no wise* cast out."

Sometimes the changed heart can get no further than this at first:

"I can but perish if I go—
I am resolved to try;
For, if I stay away, I know
I must forever die."

But another will ask: "If I have truly come to Christ, why are not my experiences *now* satisfactory?"

For one thing, Because the Spirit means to keep you in the right way. Should he give you self-satisfactions, you would trust them now, just

as you wanted them, to trust, before you came to Christ. The proof of this is in the fact that you are now seeking them.

For another thing, Because you are *still a sinner*, and this, the Spirit does not mean you shall forget. As soon as you forget it, you will also forget that Christ is all your salvation. You must be kept looking unto Jesus.

For yet another thing, Because the Spirit's work is not finished. No one is satisfied with an unfinished drawing, or painting, or statue. Satisfaction will come only after the artist has completed his work. (Therefore, let not any one criticise Christians. They are not yet perfected.)

Some one asked a painter: "Why do you take so long to do your work?"

He answered: "I paint for eternity!"

Thus with the Holy Spirit. If he seems to work slowly, tries your patience, remember two things:

1. He has a great deal to do ere he will make you like Christ.

2. He is working for eternity.

The heart which he has taken in hand is sinful. The new life is but just born in it. It must have time for growth and development. This, the Spirit's *sanctifying* work, is a gradual process.

This new life is to grow and mature like any other life. This do: Strive in God's commands, that you may not grieve the Holy Spirit, and hinder his sanctifying work. If he shows you more and more your sins, this is that he may drive you closer and closer to Christ. He is now also to perform his duties as "the Comforter." The word, so translated, does not mean that he will give you "comfort," as we use that term. It means, "one who assists, who comes along-side of the struggler or burden-bearer, to enable him to bear up and endure to the end." But for this work, no sinner would persevere in Christian life. Each one would "break down," give up, and be lost! Our hope is this: "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" You may not be able to shout over the Spirit's work now. But *you will shout when it is finished!* And yet, even then, you will not praise the Holy Spirit. He glorifies Christ! Therefore your glad, eternal praise will be to him who loved you, and gave himself for you!

But the song, now, is:

"My soul, with various tempests tossed,
Her hopes o'erturned, her projects crossed,
Sees, every day, new straits attend,
And wonders where the scene will end."

And why should it be so? Because—

"God's faithful love
Does all his children's graces prove;
'Tis thus that pride and self must fall,
That Jesus may be all in all."

CHAPTER VI.

"Making a Difference."

A FEW words we wish to add about the children of Christian parents. Sad to say, some are not reached by the religion of their parents. Many Christian parents neglect their children's religious training almost entirely. But when children *have* been well and carefully trained and instructed, it is not reasonable to expect that they are to go through such conversion experiences as others may have. Children growing up in Christian homes, where the name of Jesus is a sweet "household word," should not expect, nor be made to expect, what may be called "remarkable conversions." Yet, how often is this truth utterly cast out of thought! Therefore we find these representatives of Christian families waiting, and made to think it is right to wait, for special "experiences." There are those among them who *ought to have confessed Christ* ere now. Yea, there are those who would have done this had they not been trained to the bond-

age of *the ruinous law of equal experiences in all.*

Many have we seen who never knew when they first began to love Jesus. From childhood every thought of him has been to them pleasant. Ought such as these to be led on and on, ever waiting, but never finding, their time to confess Christ? He is already in their hearts, but they have had this truth hidden from their eyes by the teachings which fill sinners with greed for "experiences."

Try them. By nature they would not care for Christ. But their condition is *not natural*, for they do care for Christ, and delight in his service, only they don't feel that they have the right to call nor consider themselves his, because the common "signs" of change of heart—repentance, etc.,—have not come to them.

We greatly fear that "*the wisdom of man*" is keeping back many confessions of Christ which are ready and waiting. Too many—too many think that there can be no change of heart without accompanying "signs and wonders." Let all such, of those of whom we have just spoken, "examine themselves whether they be in faith."

How? By looking to see whether they can accept Jesus just as they are—even now! Let

them try their hearts in the precious hymn, mentioned already several times—

"Just as I am, without one plea."

Enough, if these and the Saviour come together!